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PAN-AFRICANISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY: AFRICAN UNION AND THE CHALLENGES OF COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

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Abstract: The paper examines the extent to which Pan-Africanism and Pan-African vision of promoting African unity, cooperation and integration has been achieved under the African Union (AU) in the 21st century. It also assesses the challenges of cooperation and integration under the AU. The paper adopted a qualitative approach, while data was gathered from secondary sources and analysed thematically. It notes that the quest for African cooperation and integration is not new, but dates back to philosophy and vision of Pan-Africanism and Pan-African movement from the 1950s and 1960s. This movement later took roots in the continent and championed the struggle of Africans and peoples of African descent for emancipation and the restoration of their dignity, against slavery, colonialism and all forms of racism and racial exploitation, and to overcome developmental challenges. After independence, the Pan-African movement found concrete expression in the establishment of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) in 1963, and later transformed to the African Union (AU) in 2002. These continental organisations have served as platforms for the pursuit of Africa cooperation and integration and addressing post-independence challenges with varying successes. The paper revealed that AU's Pan-African agenda in the 21st century including the African Economic Community (AEC), AU Agenda 2063, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), are not without challenges. Addressing these challenges holds the key to achieving the continental goal of unity and achieving the vision and goals pan-Africanism in the 21st century in Africa.

Keywords: Pan-Africanism, Integration, OAU/AU, AfCFTA, Agenda 2063.

I. Introduction

An important aspect of Pan-Africanism is the revival and development of the 'African Personality', temporarily submerged during the colonial period. It finds expression in a re-awakening consciousness among Africans and peoples of African descent of the bonds which unite us - our historical past, our culture, our common experience, and our aspirations (Nkrumah, December 12, 1962).

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The paper argues that since the ideological basis of the African Union (AU), like the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) before its transformation, is Pan-Africanism, juxtaposed, the AU is the institutional manifestation of the realization of desire of the founding fathers of the OAU to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion, cooperation and integration among the peoples of Africa, and of African states (Oloruntoba, 2020). While noting that the creation of the AU is not the last phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism, it argues that the success of Pan-Africanism in the 21st century is contingent on addressing the challenges of cooperation and integration which predate the AU, but continue to hamper the achievement of greater unity as envisaged in the constitutive act of the AU.

Pan-Africanism has been a compelling dream of Africans and the African diaspora for at least a hundred years. As an ideology and movement, it reflects pride in the African continent and Africanness, and a commitment to unity and self-rule. Even though the vision of Pan-Africanism and Pan-African movement began outside the continent in the 1950s and 1960s, it later took roots in the continent and championed the struggle of Africans and peoples of African descent for emancipation and the restoration of their dignity, against slavery, colonialism and all forms of racism and racial exploitation, and to overcome developmental challenges in the continent (Oloruntoba, 2020). After independence, the Pan-African movement found concrete expression in the establishment of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) in 1963, a continental organization, which later transformed to the African Union (AU) in 2002. These continental organisations have served as platforms for the pursuit of Africa cooperation and integration and addressing post-independence challenges with varying successes.

The quest to achieve African unity, cooperation and integration did not end with the transformation of the OAU to AU, rather, it spurred the creation of new structures to address the myriad of problems that confront Africa in the 21st century. In the paper we reexamine the extent to which Pan-Africanism and Pan-African vision of promoting African unity, cooperation and integration has been achieved under the African Union (AU). It also assesses the challenges of cooperation and integration under the AU. To what extent is Pan-Africanism still relevant and serving as the ideological beacon of the AU in promoting intra-African unity, cooperation and integration? What are the contemporary challenges faced by the AU in institutionalizing Pan-Africanism and integration? What are the prospects for a United States of Africa? In addressing these questions, the article adopted a descriptive and qualitative approach. Data was gathered from secondary sources including books, monographs, journal articles, government reports and websites of the AU. This was analysed thematically. This

emphasizes themes, identifying, synthesizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning of information gathered. The paper is divided into five sections. Following the introduction, section two deals with the conceptual underpinnings of the paper, and section three focuses on pan-Africanism and the African integration under the OAU/AU, section four discusses the challenges of African cooperation and integration under the AU. The section five is the conclusion.

II. Conceptualising Pan-Africanism, Cooperation and Integration in Africa

The term Pan-Africanism has remained essentially contested. There has never been one universally accepted definition of exactly what constitutes Pan-Africanism. Different authors and scholars have provided variants of definitions while acknowledging the fact that Pan-Africanism has taken different forms at different historical moments and geographical locations. Nevertheless, most writers would agree that Pan Africanism, sometimes referred to as black-nationalism or Afro-centrism, as ideology and movement, is concerned with the social, economic, cultural and political emancipation of African peoples, including the African diaspora. The AU held its 21st Ordinary Session from 26th -27th May, 2013, at Addis Ababa, fifty years after the founding of its predecessor the OAU in May 1963. The AU, which was barely ten years old, adopted the theme of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance for the anniversary summit. A special AU publication explained that

Pan-Africanism is an ideology and movement that encouraged the solidarity of Africans worldwide. It is based on the belief that unity is vital to economic, social and political progress and aims to ‘unify and uplift’ people of African descent. The ideology asserts that the fates of all African peoples and countries are intertwined. At its core, Pan-Africanism is ‘a belief that African peoples both on the continent and in the diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny (Oloruntoba, 2020; Kumah-Abiwu 2013, p.124)

What underlies the manifold visions and approaches of Pan-Africanism and Pan-Africanists is a belief in the unity, common history and common purpose of the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora and the notion that their destinies are interconnected (Adi, 2018). According to Alli (2005) Pan-Africanism is a movement initiated by people of African descent from the US and the Caribbean as a reaction to slavery, its aftermath and the condition of Africans in the world. Whilst cooperation refers to the process of groups working or acting together for common, mutual, or some underlying benefit, as opposed to working in competition for selfish benefit; integration has been conceptualized as the action or process of

successfully joining or mixing different people together. In this case, it refers to the process of bringing the African people together to work for the integration and development of the continent of Africa. African cooperation and integration have been pursued at regional levels, hence, referred to as regional cooperation and integration. A region is defined as a group of countries which created a level framework for cooperation and covers an extensive economic relationship (Page, 2001). Regional integration is seen as a rational response to the difficulties faced by a continent with many small national markets and landlocked countries (Hartzenberg, 2011).

Colonialism succeeded in the balkanization and fragmentation of Africa into small countries mainly to further the interests of the then colonial powers. Many years after independence, most African countries have remained rather small and weak. Africans are aware that the kingdoms and cultures of Africa were relatively well integrated in pre-colonial times. As a result, African governments have concluded a very large number of regional integration arrangements, several of which have significant membership overlap (Sesay, 2008). While characterized by ambitious targets, they have a dismally poor implementation record. In essence, regional integration arrangements not only in Africa, but in other parts of the world have generally been perceived to be vehicles for overcoming the constraint of small economic sizes of nations by forging close economic cooperation to enhance growth and development. The nexus between these concepts is not farfetched. Regional integration in Africa flows from the logic of Pan-Africanism. It exemplifies attempts at moving beyond the nation-state to foster a higher level cooperation among African states to actualize the integration on the continent.

III. Institutionalization of Pan-Africanism and African Quest for Unity and Cooperation under the OAU/AU

The first phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism was the Pan-African Congresses that were held from the end of the nineteenth-century and into the beginning of the twentieth century. With the representation of Pan-African delegates from Africa, the fifth pan African congress under Dubois was held in London in 1945. Africans in attendance who later became nationalist leaders included Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta and Tom Mboya of Kenya; Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania; and Peter Abrahams of South Africa (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2010). It was at the 1945 conference that Pan-Africanism became an instrument of African nationalism as borne out by the resolutions and

declarations made there. While affirming the rights of the African peoples to freedom from imperial control, both economic and political, they also declared that ‘the struggle for political power by colonial and subject peoples is the first step towards, and the necessary prerequisite to complete social, economic and political emancipation’ (Ajala, 1988).

The attainment of independence by Ghana in 1957 naturally opened a new chapter on the course of the Pan-African Movement. Kwame Nkrumah, who had attended the Pan-African Congress of 1945, emerged as the Head of the independent government of Ghana favoured a radical approach for the Pan-African Movement. Ghana’s Independence also served as an inspiration for other African countries still under the colonial yoke. Between 15th to 22nd April 1958 all the independent African states were called to an All-African Peoples’ Congress in Ghana. The countries that attended were Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Republic and the host country, Ghana. This Conference of Independent African States (CIAS) no doubt set a precedent by asserting and proclaiming unity among the independent African states at that time and demonstrated that Pan-Africanism had emerged from the realm of idealism into the field of practical politics. However, its major shortcoming was that only a few African countries that had attained independence were qualified to attend, thus necessitating the convening of an All-African People Organisation Conference that took place in Accra in 1958 (Ajala, 1988). This conference had immense significance, particularly because of the presence of many African political parties and the declaration that ‘...the first loyalty of African states will be an African commonwealth’ (Ajala, 1988).

From the interactions of African countries in the early days of their independence, it is evident that the point of disagreement that will later emerge between African countries was not over whether there was the need for Africa states to unite, as noted by Nkrumah’s treatise- ‘Africa Must Unite’ (Nkrumah, 1963). However, a major point of disagreement that emerged was how African states should unite. The Pan-African project of the unity and economic development of Africa through a single federation was a major goal of the Pan-African movement. Late Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and several other African leaders were committed to the idea of achieving continental unity through a single federation. Nkrumah’s commitment to total liberation of Africa was demonstrated when he proclaimed at the time of Ghana’s independence that ‘the independence of Ghana was meaningless unless it was linked up with the total liberation of the African continent’ (Nkrumah, 1963). Not all African leaders shared Nkrumah’s vision of achieving continental unity through the creation of a union government for Africa. Before the establishment of the OAU, the Pan-African movement was

fractured into ideological groups namely, the Casablanca and the Monrovia groups. Whereas the Casablanca bloc favoured political integration as a prerequisite for economic integration and a socialist path to economic development, the Monrovia group preferred a functionalist approach to African integration.

Despite the different views expressed by African leaders on African unity and how to actualise the goal, there was a common desire to move forward in dealing with common challenges which at that time centred on ending colonialism and preserving the independence of African states. Through the diplomatic initiative of Emperor Heile Selassie of Ethiopia, a compromise was reached between the two ideological groups which met in May 1963 in Addis Ababa to establish the OAU. The second phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism was the inauguration of the OAU. The principles of the OAU kept the spirit of Pan-Africanism alive. The primary objective of this principle was to continue the tradition of solidarity and cooperation among Africans. During the era of the OAU, the key challenge was ending colonialism in the African continent (Wapmuk, 2009). The OAU was founded with the main objective of bringing African states together so that they can have stronger voice on the international stage and to build the political strength and solidarity necessary for the prosecution of the anti-colonial struggles to free the African states still under the yoke of colonialism and racist rule. In addition to the colonial struggles, the OAU also played significant roles as a stabilising factor in the search for unity of African states, integration and development. It promoted the settlement of a number of territorial and other political conflicts between African states. In addition, the OAU sought to assert the right of Africans to control their social, economic and political affairs and achieve the freedom necessary to consolidate peace and development. The OAU succeeded in its primary mission, with the help of international actors, in liberating the continent on 27 April 1994, when a new government based on a one-person-one-vote came into being in South Africa under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. The OAU, however, was not so effective in monitoring and policing the affairs of its own Member States when it came to the issues of violent conflict; corruption; economic mismanagement; poor governance; lack of human rights; lack of gender equality; and poverty eradication, amongst others (Murithi, 2015).

The collapse of apartheid in South Africa gave additional impetus for the transformation of OAU. The achievement actually marked the end of a historical era, and the end of the era of national liberation struggle. With this development and against the background of globalization which raised some critical problems, the suppressed issues of socio-economic development came to the fore. The organization proved weak in mobilising

member states to address violent conflicts, political corruption, economic development, good governance, respect for human rights, gender equality, poverty eradication and respect for the rule of law. Against the forgoing, it became necessary to review the charter of the OAU as a prelude to the restructuring of the continental body and the framework for its work (Adogamhe, 2008).

Through political, diplomatic, and financial support provided by the OAU member states through its Liberation Committee, the OAU succeeded phenomenally in its self-assigned task of liberating African states from the yoke of colonial rule. As a result, under OAU guidance, countries like Mozambique (1974), Sao Tome and Principe (1974), Cape Verde, Angola (1975), Zimbabwe (1980), Namibia (1990) and South Africa (1994) were liberated. The OAU also successfully mediated some disputes such as Algeria-Morocco dispute between 1964 and 1965, and Kenya-Somalia border disputes between 1965 and 1967. In all these endeavours, despite the ups and downs of global politics, the OAU was able to mobilise Africa's political and diplomatic resources to achieve the ultimate objective of liberating the continent from colonial yoke. That critical goal was achieved in about three decades with the end of the apartheid system and the enthronement of democratic rule in South Africa with the election of Nelson Mandela as first black President in 1994 in that country (Wapmuk & Akinkuotu, 2018).

In the economic field, the OAU achieved part of some of its commitments. For example, leaders recognized the economic challenges facing the continent and showed determination to address them by introducing development initiatives. At the level of economic integration, cooperation, and development, there emerged over the 40 years under the OAU several regional and sub-regional groupings reflecting an acceptance of transitional, state-led economic cooperation involving the pooling of resources in response to shared problems and opportunities. This led to the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) by the Heads of State and Government of the OAU in 1980. The LPA and the Final Act of Lagos were initiated as central idea of 'collective self-reliance' of the continent. This idea was strongly reaffirmed in the Abuja Treaty of June 1991 seeking to establish the African economic community (AEC) and which sought to increase economic self-reliance and promote self-sustaining development (Adejumobi & Olukoshi, 2009).

However, enormous security, governance and developmental challenges still confronted African states. The evidence for this was the sporadic conflict that spread across the entire continent from Liberia to Angola to Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire etc. The conflicts were the result of failure of governance in the critical areas of economic development, particularly

social provisioning, poverty eradication and the political crisis of marginalisation, injustice, identity and others. In addition, the world had changed significantly; globalisation has impacted on world affairs in a manner which has further worsened the standing of many African states in the global economy. With these critical issues arising, African leaders appreciated the need to adjust to the dynamics of a new era and pursue the rapid socio-economic development. Africa faced a number of development challenges despite its vast resources. Poverty has remained endemic in the continent. Sub Saharan Africa had about 100 million more people living on less than US\$ 1 dollar in 2001 than in 1991 (UNDP, 2005:34). The region also had the highest rate of malnourishment, with one third of the population living below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption (UNDP, 2005:270). In addition, Africa has the lowest primary school enrolment rates and the region's progress in access to safe drinking water is still slow (UNDP, 2005:258).

This was the reason why after several negotiations among African states and the endorsement of the Sirte Declaration in 1999 and the adoption of the Constitutive Act in Lome on July 11, 2002, the OAU was transformed to the African Union on July 9, 2002 in Durban, South Africa. The third phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism is the creation of the AU. It will not be the last phase. Subsequent phases and organizations will bring about ever closer political, economic, social and ties among African peoples. African unity is an idea that can be traced back to the nineteenth-century (Adogamhe, 2008). The African Union is a twenty-first century expression of a nineteenth-century idea. As such it is an imperfect expression, but nevertheless the best expression of Pan-Africanism that can be brought forth at this time.

The OAU was formally transformed after about 45 years of existence. The AU was formally launched on July 9, 2002, as a new body to meet the collective aspiration of the African peoples. The formation of the AU has been attributed to the changing political, social, and economic environment both in Africa and the world at large. In the decade of the 21st century, globalization has intensified the competition for access to global resources and power. African leaders knew they have to work together to address the many challenges confronting the continent. According to the former OAU Secretary General, Dr. Salim A Salim:

The creation of the AU has the ultimate objective of enhancing unity, strengthening cooperation and coordination as well as equipping the continent with a legal and institutional framework, which would enable Africa to gain its rightful place in the community of nations. The cardinal motivation behind the establishment of the African Union was the desire to deepen and enhance

the cohesion, solidarity and integration of the countries and peoples of Africa. (Salim, 2001, p.2)

While some observers had hailed the emergence of the AU as a paradigm shift in continental affairs, others saw it as simply an ‘old wine in new skin’ and perhaps ‘a mimicry of the EU’ (Sesay, 2008, p.8). Whatever the perception, the AU seeks to promote a paradigm shift in intra-African affairs. Its main objective is to “achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the peoples of Africa” (African Union, 2002, p 4). Unlike the OAU, the AU is endowed with the right to intervene in the internal affairs of its member states in circumstances involving war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide (African Union, 2002, p.2). The Constitutive Act of the AU also includes provisions for promoting and ensuring the rule of law, human rights and democratic governance, particularly Article 30 which forbids unconstitutional changes of government (African Union, 2002). In terms of development, the AU has adopted the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to promote best practices in the area of governance among African states. The continental judicial framework found expression in the form of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights. And, in order to promote the participation of the civil society, the AU set up consultative mechanisms such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) (Murithi, 2015).

Following the ratification of the AU protocol relating to the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in December 2003, the PSC became fully operational on 16 March 2004 as the AU organ mandated to address peace and security in Africa. A closer examination of conflict situations in various African countries vis-à-vis the role of the AU suggests that Africa still grapples with numerous conflicts situations which bring to question the efficacy of much drummed “African Solutions to African problems” (Kasaija, 2013, p.117). Examples which suffice here includes the protracted conflict in Sudan’s Darfur, between the Sudan and Southern Sudan, the recent post-election crisis in Cote d’Ivoire between December 2010 and March 2011; crisis in Libya led by the National Transition Council (NTC) which led to the killing of Muammar Ghaddafi; and crisis involving Islamist forces in Mali seeking an independent state for the Tuaregs (Kasaija, 2013). In most of these conflict cases, the AU showed a bias towards a negotiated settlement and emphasised the centrality of political processes.

The AU has undoubtedly made tangible achievements since its launching in Durban, South Africa in July 2002, as evidenced by the establishment of its organs such as the Assembly of the Union, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee, the Pan African Parliament, the Commission, the African Court of Justice, the African Court on Human Rights, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the African Peer Review Mechanism, and the Peace and Security Council. Equally important, is the AU's vision to address the economic, social and political challenges confronting the African continent in a rapidly globalizing world. There is consensus at the level of AU that there is an urgent need to eradicate poverty and bring about rapid socio-economic development in the continent.

In the area of peace and security, Africa's regional organizations have made substantial strides over the past decade in assuming primary responsibility for promoting peace and security. Acting on the rationale that the increasingly regional nature of conflict in Africa necessitates an increasingly regional response, many of the continent's regional organisations have added security and conflict management initiatives to their original purpose, which were mostly economic. The best-known and probably best-developed are those of Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), but IGAD, ECCAS, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), COMESA, the Arab-Maghreb Union (AMU), and the East African Community (EAC) have also begun to establish peace and security structures (Wapmuk & Akinkuotu, 2018). For example, within West Africa, particularly in the 1990s, challenges posed by violent conflicts and civil wars which engulfed some member states of the ECOWAS such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, with adverse bush-fire effect necessitated the establishment of the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) (Murithi, 2015). Through the sub-regional peace and security mechanism, ECOWAS made some positive contributions to restoring stability through its interventions in Liberia (1990), Sierra Leone (1997), Guinea Bissau (1999), and Cote d'Ivoire (2002), amongst others. In this regard, adequacy of resources is crucial to the fulfillment of the work of the AU and sub-regional organizations and implementation of regional initiatives (Danso, 1995). However, the funding sources of the AU have not changed, and have not been diversified to reflect the new goals contained in the successive initiatives.

IV. Pan-Africanism and Africa's Regional Integration Efforts

Some scholars have argued that integration in Africa progressed in phases (Aniche, 2017). The first phase of African integration started as early as 10th century and focused more on the religious sphere with the penetration of Arabism, Islam and Christianity into the continent. The second phase of integration in Africa was era of early pan-Africanism during European colonialism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Adi, 2018). This phase was spearheaded or pioneered by diaspora Africans in the continents of Americas and Europe like Henry Sylvester-Williams, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B du Bois, Malcolm X, among others (Alli, 2005). The aims were to unite all people of African descent both those in Africa and those in diaspora to tackle racial discrimination and segregation, racism, colonialism, imperialism, alien religion and slavery against blacks; and pursue freedom, self-determination, self-government, independence and decolonization for Africa (Adi, 2018). The third phase of African integration began in the early 20th century and began the era of modern pan-Africanism during the colonial era (Murithi, 2007). It was during this period that yet to be independent and later independent African countries began to experiment with various integration schemes. In West Africa, the first experiments included the West African Currency Board (WACB) established in 1912 by the British to manage currency and issue the legal tender in the four colonies - Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, to ease trade; the West African Airways Corporation (WAAC), to facilitate air transportation; and the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) to standardize examination for university admission in the four colonies. France also created the Communauté financière d'Afrique (CFA) in 1945, to provide legal tender in the French speaking countries (Sesay & Omotosho, 2011). In southern Africa, the Southern Rhodesia Customs Union emerged in 1949 between South Africa and present-day Zimbabwe.

Pan-Africanism provided the impetus for regional integration after independence as a pillar of Africa's developmental strategy. This became a major preoccupation of the OAU and United Nations Economic Commission on Africa (ECA), under the able leadership of Professor Adebayo Adedeji. Accordingly, African countries viewed regional integration during this period as a strategy to address post-independence developmental challenges. In 1962, the Ghana-Upper Volta Trade Agreement was done between Ghana and Upper Volta (renamed Burkina Faso). In the same year, countries such as Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, and Gabon agreed to establish the Equatorial Customs Union, which was the predecessor to the Customs Union of Central African States. There was also the African Common Market linking Algeria, United Arab Republic (Egypt), Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and Morocco (UNECA, 2004). Of course, the unification of various blocs (Brazzaville,

Casablanca, and Monrovia blocs) culminating in the establishment of OAU in 1963. This laid the bed rock for the development of the 1980 Lagos Plan, and Abuja Treaty of 1991 that gave birth to African Economic Community (AEC). More attention was to be given to the regional integration project with the launch of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) in 1980. The vision of regional integration was given programmatic direction by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) then led by Professor Adebayo Adedeji. The LPA called for the integration of the continent based on self-reliance, self-sustaining, and developmental regionalism. Though the LPA was criticised for not having a detailed implementation strategy for the integration process, a decade later, the OAU provided a roadmap for achieving African integration by adopting the African Economic Treaty (AET) establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) (Bach 2016). The AEC seeks to promote cooperation and integration through regional integration schemes, intra-African trade, and to create a common market. The Abuja Treaty set out a step-by-step approach to regional integration in Africa with the creation of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and a path for the creation of an AEC by 2028.

In sum, the stated goals of the organization include, the creation of free trade areas, custom unions, a single market, a central bank, and a common currency thus establishing an economic and monetary union. The Abuja Treaty clearly states that to achieve these objectives Regional Economic Communities (RECs) form the pillars of the AEC. Currently, there are eight major integration schemes in Africa as recognised by the AU.

Figure 1. Africa's eight REC's**Africa's eight RECs**

The AU recognises eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs), each with different roles and structures.



Source: Adetula, VOA, Bereketab, R, Laakso, L & Levin, J. (2020). The legacy of Pan-Africanism in African integration today. Retrieved from <https://nai.uu.se/news-and-events/news/2020-12-22-the-legacy-of-pan-africanism-in-african-integration-today.html>

These are the West African Economic Community (CEAO), Community for East and Southern African states (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Central African Customs and Economic Union (EDEAC), the African and Malagasy Common Organization (OCAM), the Comité Permanent Consultatif du Maghreb (CPCM), and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) (Oppong, 2010). Other blocs include greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) - which also includes most Middle Eastern States; Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL); Indian Ocean Commission (IOC); Liptako-Gourma Authority (LGA); and Mano River Union (MRU). Currently, many of the RECs have an overlapping in terms of their membership. Several of the RECs which constitute the pillars of the AEC also have subgroups with tighter customs and/or monetary unions of their own. For example, within the Economic Community of Central African States

(ECCAS) there is the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC); within the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), there are the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) and within South African Development Community (SADC), it has the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) (Okeke & Aniche, 2012).

The Abuja Treaty, signed in 1991 by the OAU/AU, set the path for how the African Economic Community (AEC) should progress through regional economic communities (RECs). African member countries are working on the six stages of the AEC. They have already established eight RECs, which was stage I. Now the challenge is to harmonize tariffs (stage II) and create Free Trade Area (FTA) (III). The FTAs are expected to progress to a continent-wide customs union (stage IV) to be followed by an African common market (V) with a single currency. The ultimate goal for the AEC is to merge the eight RECs into one economic and monetary union (stage VI) (Wapmuk & Akinkuotu, 2018). In terms of timelines, stage one, the creation of regional blocs in regions where such do not yet exist was expected to be completed by 1999. Stage two- strengthening of intra-REC integration and inter-REC harmonization of tariffs was expected to be completed in 2007. The third stage, involves the establishment of a free trade area and customs union in each of the regional bloc, and this is expected to be completed by 2017. The fourth stage, the establishing of a continent-wide customs union and thus a free trade area, is expected to be completed by 2019. In the fifth stage, to be completed by 2023, the establishment of a continent-wide African common Market is expected to be completed. The sixth and final stage, which is the establishment of a continent-wide economic and monetary union and thus, a currency union and parliament, is expected to be completed by the year 2028. In terms of implementation, progress has been slow. However, recent efforts show a desire to accelerate regional integration as exemplified by the adoption and signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the protocol on free movement and the AU agenda 2063 (Wapmuk & Akinkuotu, 2018).

V. Pan-Africanism and AU's Agenda in the 21st century

The AU's agenda for the 21st century are clearly captured in the Agenda 2063- 'The Africa We Want'. According to the African Union, the Agenda 2063 "is a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years. It builds on and seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental

initiatives for growth and sustainable development” (AUC, 2015, p.1) The AU Agenda 2063 was adopted by African Heads of State and Government in 2013, specifically, during the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU. This agenda is an ambitious vision and action plan intended to drive Africa's change, development, and transformation for the next 50 years. It builds on seven (7) aspiration visions, which include:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance;
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
4. A peaceful and secure Africa;
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics
6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children;
7. Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner.

While the desire to accelerate regional integration is not in doubt, however, the question is to what extent have the AU aspirations of promoting intra-African unity, cooperation and integration been achieved. Some proposals aimed at fast-tracking African integration have served as litmus tests for not only African unity and cooperation, but also for the institutionalisation of Pan-Africanism under the AU in the 21st century (AUC, 2015). This article focuses on two grant issues: the quest for the Union Government for Africa and The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

VI. Pan-Africanism and the Quest for the Union Government for Africa

It was Nkrumah who first espoused the radical idea of a United States of Africa seeking to abolish the colonially created states and instead form one grand, supranational political organization. This was a political integration in the form of federalism that would ensure Africa's functionality and survivability. Kwame Nkrumah expressed this idea in his famous statement, 'seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be added unto you'. He firmly believed that political unity a critical requirement for economic independence and development in Africa.

This was resurrected by the Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi. When he proposed unification of Africa first during Extra-Ordinary Summit of the OAU held in Sirte, Libya on 9

September 1999, and at the 4th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Abuja, Nigeria on 30 and 31 January 2005, it was received by other African leaders with mixed feelings. That notwithstanding, African leaders set up a Committee of Heads of State and Government chaired by the President of the Republic of Uganda and composed of Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia, Niger, Senegal, and Tunisia to study the proposal (Murithi, 2015; Murithi, 2007). In November 2005 the Committee convened a conference under the theme 'Desirability of a Union Government in Africa'. The conference came up with major conclusions, key among which was that the creation of a union government must come about through the principle of gradual incrementalism. Subsequent work was done by the Committee of Seven, which in July 2006, submitted a detailed report titled: A study on an African Union Government: Towards the United States of Africa, in July 2006, to the 7th ordinary session of AU Assembly in Banjul, Gambia.

The 'Grand Debate' on the Union Government at the level of Heads of State and Government at the 9th Ordinary Summit in Accra, Ghana, in July 2007. It was at Accra, Ghana that hosted the first grand debate on the federation or United States of Africa in the early 1960s (Murithi, 2015; Murithi, 2007). At Accra, two major camps emerged-the maximalists that favoured immediate unification and led by Libya and Senegal; and the gradualists, featured countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, the Gambia, Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mauritius. They favoured achievement of integration in stages with priority given to the harmonization of policies (Lecoutre, 2008). In the end, the idea of a Union Government for Africa under a United States of Africa, though favourable, was deferred. Even so, there is no doubt that this ambition still lingers on (Adetula, Bereketeab, Laakso, & Levin, 2020).

VII. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

In the area of intra-African trade, the performance of African states is still unsatisfactory, despite substantial progress made by some countries and regional economic communities in reducing and eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers. In 2004, intra-African trade accounted for only 9 percent of the total volume of the continent's export. The 9 percent came mainly from three regions, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (Mkwezalamba & Chinyama, 2007, p. 5). The low performance can be explained by several factors including type of production-mainly primary

goods, poor infrastructure, institutional and financial weakness and poor trade regulations and policies among member states of AU. Furthermore, the level of investment in Africa is very low with her share in global Foreign Direct Investment inflows remaining below 5 percent. Most of the investments concentrate in a few countries that export natural resources like oil and minerals. Out of about 38 million people in the world estimated to have died from HIV-AIDS in 2004, 25 million of them are in sub-Saharan Africa. (UNDP, 2005, p.7). Less than 4 percent of people who need anti-retroviral drugs actually receive them.

The roadmap of the CFTA was adopted by the AU in 2012. The signing of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) agreement encouraged African leaders to recommit themselves to pursuit of African economic integration project (Leshoele, 2019). This commitment resulted in the launched of the negotiations towards a CFTA on 15 June 2015, at the meeting of AU Heads of State in Johannesburg. In July 2016, African leaders decided to fast track the CFTA negotiations and create a High-Level Panel ensure the success of the project, with a deadline for its launch set by the end of 2017. Following series of negotiations, the signing of the AfCFTA document was done at the 10th Extra Ordinary Session of the AU held from 17-21 March 2018, in Kigali, Rwanda. If the signatories to the various instruments at this session are indicative of members' support to Africa's march towards achieving the AEC, then the need to unite becomes even more imperative. Out of the AU membership of 55 countries, as at March 2018, 44 countries signed AfCFTA Consolidated Text; 47 countries signed the Kigali Declaration; and 30 countries signed the Free Movement Protocol. While the number was encouraging, the delay in signing by more influential countries on the African continent such as Nigeria and South Africa became an issue of concern. Even though most African countries signed the AfCFTA, many are yet to understand the deep implications for their economies. Article 23 of the AfCFTA Agreement states that it will enter into force thirty days after deposit of the 22 deposited their instruments of ratification. On 29th April, the Saharawi Republic deposited the 22 instruments of ratification, enabling the AU to meet the threshold for the agreement to come into effect.

The AfCFTA was to come into force for member states that have ratified the agreement, 30 days after the 22nd ratification has been deposited at the AU Commission and this was achieved on 30 May 2019. As of 1 December 2020, 32 of 55 African countries had ratified the AfCFTA.

Figure 2. Countries have ratified the AfCFTA in December 2020.

Source: Tralac cited in Source: Adetula, VOA, Bereketeab, R, Laakso, L & Levin, J. (2020). The legacy of Pan-Africanism in African integration today. Retrieved from <https://nai.uu.se/news-and-events/news/2020-12-22-the-legacy-of-pan-africanism-in-african-integration-today.html>

Following this development, the people of Africa elated and hoped that it was the dawn of a new era of interdependence in the African continent. Art 13, AfCFTA Agreement states that “the Assembly shall establish the Secretariat, decide on its nature, location and approve its structure and budget”. By February 2020 it was agreed that the AfCFTA is expected to play a major role in managing the trade agreement and related affairs of the members, be located in Ghana, and Mr. Wamkele Mene was sworn-in as the first Secretary General of the AfCFTA) on 19 March 2020. The negotiation of the tariffs will aim to progressively reduce and eliminate customs duties and non-tariff barriers on goods. At this stage, the goal is for 90 percent of tariff lines to have a zero duty within 5 years or 10 years for the Less Developed Countries. According to the AU, the AfCFTA seeks to create a single continental market for goods and services with free, movement of businesspeople and investments. Studies by UNECA affirm that by 2030, the African market size is expected to reach 1.7 billion people, with a combined and cumulative consumer and business spending of US\$6.7 trillion. Accordingly, the AfCFTA seeks to expand intra-African trade through better harmonisation and coordination of trade liberalisation and facilitation regimes and instruments across Africa regional economic communities and at the continental level (Mishra 2018). This is to be achieved with full cooperation of countries that have signed unto the agreement.

The significance of the AfCFTA cannot be overstated: It will be the world's largest free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994. The AfCFTA has been described as an important step towards rationalising Africa's regional trade arrangements to deepen economic integration. It is not only expected to bring together 55 AU member countries with combined population of 1 billion people and combined GDP of USD3.4 trillion, but also, expand industrial production, enhance inflow of foreign direct investment, and increase intra-African trade in industrial products to about US\$60 billion annually (Afreximbank, 2018). While the AU argues that AfCFTA will boost intra-African economic integration through increased trade and investment, the extent to which Africa states would reap the benefits of the free trade area and enhance regional integration remains unclear.

Numerous challenges that currently affect intra-African trade include, but not limited to, inequality within and between African states; the low development level of African economies and their excessive dependence on commodity production and exports, protectionist trade policies, weak infrastructure, and high security risks. African countries depend largely on external earnings from international trade with major powers to finance their countries (Oloruntoba & Nshimbi, 2017). Noteworthy economic disparity between and within countries makes integration quite challenging. As the free trade reforms are likely to increase inequality between Africa's states, the question is what is to be done to ensure fairness in the distribution of benefits across the countries, in order to prevent further disparities and inequality. It will be challenging to monitor the breakdown of welfare gains and losses due to AfCFTA and other policy changes that occur at the same time. Europe and USA have remained major destination for African products, while Asia – China and India in particular, are becoming more important. The reluctance of some African states such as Nigeria to sign the AfCFTA shows that not all African states are convinced that the promised continental benefits of free trade would align with their national interests. Some countries perceive the AfCFTA as a reintroduction of the earlier rejected contentious EU's EPA. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) strongly cautioned Nigeria not to sign the AfCFTA so as to avoid any unintended consequence of opening up the economy to foreign products through the back door and exposing the country's relatively disadvantaged productive sectors to unmanageable pressure. Though Nigeria and several other countries later signed the Agreement, it is evident that African countries are not fully convinced of the promised benefits. The fears or concerns are not baseless. Given Africa's weak position in terms of industrialization, the AfCFTA will only encourage industrialise countries to use other

African nations to push their products into other parts of Africa, particularly Nigeria that has the largest market in West Africa.

VIII. Challenges of Institutionalizing Pan-Africanism and Achieving Integration under the AU

Pan-Africanism is recognition that Africans have been divided and competing among themselves and deprived of the true ownership of their own resources and allowed too much external interference in their internal affairs. Pan-Africanism is recognition that the only way to deal with challenges of unity and intra-African problems is by promoting greater solidarity amongst Africans. A regional integration project that embraces all the 55 AU member states seeks to achieve the ultimate goal of establishing the AEC by the year 2028. There are many challenges to the AU achieving the ideals of Pan-African unity, solidarity, cooperation and integration. Some of the pertinent challenges are identified and discussed. The first notable challenge is that of economic development in Africa. For most of the emerging economies within Africa, the 1990s will be remembered as a disappointing time in terms of economic development (Danso, 30). Unlike regions such as East and South Asia that saw domestic economic liberalization and outward orientation associated with growth, poverty reduction, and social progress, Africa's regional progress did not witness the take-off that was expected at the beginning of the decade. Despite signs of recovery in the late 1990s, not much progress was achieved in terms of economic development in most African countries. The region is still confronted with other developmental challenges including poverty, high rate of unemployment, diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, amongst others, which have clogged the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which has been succeeded by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

That notwithstanding, economic integration of Africa has always remained a central theme in Africa's quest for development. This was the central theme of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos (1980); Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (APPER), which was later converted to United Nations Programme of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) (1986) – following the special United Nations Session on Africa in 1986; the African Alternative to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) (1989); the African Charter for Popular Participation for Development (1990); the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the

1990s, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (2001); in the creation of the Africa Union and numerous other high level statements and reports on African policy and development strategy (Adedeji, 2002).

The second challenge is the gap between agreements and their implementation in Africa (Wapmuk & Akinkuotu, 2018). The record of implementation of treaties, protocols and decisions is far from satisfactory. This can be attributed to "the adoption of unrealistic and unfeasible dates for implementation and lack of institutional architecture of the regional economic communities that has the power, authority and resource to enforce decisions and monitor the implementation of programs" (Hailu, 2014, p.318). The third challenge confronting economic integration in Africa, particularly in reference to the RECs, is the existence of multiple, overlapping and often conflicting regional integration arrangements within the same region. Many African countries belong to more than one REC. There is the problem of low priority accorded to the implementation of integration programs vis-à-vis national ones which are very often supported and financed by influential international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. For example, under the structural adjustment programs (SAP) in place in most African countries, domestic considerations take precedence over sub-regional integration preoccupations. There also is the inadequacy of the economic infrastructure to support economic integration. For instance, one of the major constraints on the growth and development of intra-African trade has been the inadequacy of payment and financial systems in place in Africa. Increased African trade will need finance and financial instruments such as banking networks providing letters of credit, export credits, and other financial services. There are the diversified currency exchange regimes and payment restrictions that prevail in Africa. Integration will require the adoption of collective policy measures to facilitate the liberalization of payment and exchange restriction and to enhance the convertibility of national currencies.

Third, the existence of border conflicts, numerous conflicts, civil wars, and linguistic rivalries especially English and French, compounded by racial suspicion in the continent especially between black Africans and Arab Africans can hamper economic integration. The hostile world economic environment has meant that many of the regions' countries are preoccupied with short-term recovery. There is also the lack of an acclaimed integration leader in the region with impeccable credentials such as a domestic economic track record of monetary and financial stability, diligent implementation of Community programs, a willingness to assume requisite responsibilities and a dominant position in regional trade and finance (Wapmuk & Akinkuotu, 2018).

Fourth, among member countries, the political will that is necessary to see integration succeed is lacking. It goes to show the deeper issue of non-observance of political commitments undertaken by African leaders within the respective agreements (Abraham 92). There is also, the problem of funding the sub-regional and continental organizations, a load carried by few African countries. One of the perennial problems facing the AU, for instance, has been not having enough financial resources generated from within to deploy as, when and where necessary. There is an obvious disconnect, for instance, between the ever-growing demand on the Union and the ability to mobilize the right number of resources to achieve them. At several critical periods, past and present, the AU not only found itself constrained by its inability to fund its work but had to solicit for same from external donors or partners as often called. Limited by such challenge, the AU finds it difficult to amplify and give relevance to any African position, or to exercise any credible and autonomous agency. In pursuit of the ideal of finding 'African solutions to African problems', funding problems have severely limited the AU's actions and interventions in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia and elsewhere (Sesay, 2008). Despite the noble step taken to make the AU more solvent, African states need to do more to overcome the lack of political will and the fiscal challenges that many African countries are currently facing, which continue to render the continent's efforts to deepen integration prostrate.

The fifth challenge is the fact that integration efforts in Africa have mainly been state-centric, confined to a narrow group of political leaders and technocrats. There is no or very minimal participation of the general public in discussing continental integration initiatives. The civil society in most African countries is hardly given serious attention on the issue of integration (Oloruntoba, 2016). Decisions at the continental and regional levels are adopted with limited participation and discussion at the national level. This manifested clearly in the process of negotiating the AfCFTA. Most stakeholders were not involved in the negotiations process. It is against this background that the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and other civil society groups protested the signing of the AfCFTA by the Nigerian government.

The sixth and equally important challenge to regional integration in Africa is that of infrastructure. UNECA and UNCTAD clearly underscored the necessity of basic infrastructure in facilitating the success of the continental integration project. Currently, many African countries face problems with roads, rail, ports, air transport, energy, telecommunications and other infrastructure. Infrastructure deficit is major constraints to economic growth and integration in Africa. Inadequacy of roads that connect African

countries poses a challenge in boosting cross border trade. A related challenge is that of transportation sector in the continent is characterized by fragmentation, inadequate capacity, and poor performance as road and rail network is sparse and many of its sea ports and airports are in need of refurbishment and expansion. Energy infrastructure is also an important element in integration. Many African countries are characterized by lack of sufficient energy infrastructure. It is well recognized by the authorities in the continent that without adequate energy, among its member countries or develop sustainable industries, inhibiting its ability to improve the livelihoods of its population.

The seventh major challenge to regional integration in Africa is the failure at the level of governance. The failure of governments to deliver the good life to African people has led to contestations for power and control. Also, elections are commonplace in Africa, but the credibility of these elections are the subject of controversies. Some African states are beginning to experience democratic reversals as military coups resurging, a situation which shows pitfalls in terms of regional responses. In Guinea, Mali, and Chad, heads of state have been removed from office through military coups. These coups are not just about military adventurism in politics (Ani, 2001). The ruling elites in these countries are largely separate or isolated from the people they lead. Rather, they reflect a new trend of democratic re-negotiation where ordinary populations are resolute against governance systems that fail to provide socio-economic dividends to its citizens. The AU and sub-regional organizations like the ECOWAS have consistently rejected military coups and condemned unconstitutional changes of government that have been attempted since the formation of the AU in 2001. While the AU and ECOWAS are consistent in condemning unconstitutional changes of government, similar effort has not been made to condemn and sanction the practices of constitutional amendments that prolong the stay of leaders beyond their initial term limits (Ani, 2001). many in Africa are experiencing many challenges ranging from socio-economic to security crises further exacerbated by COVID-19 disruptions. For example, Tunisia, Zimbabwe and Sudan continue to face economic hardships and political crises. Libya experienced worsened economic conditions, governance crises and civil war since the overthrow and death of Gaddafi. The recent wave of coups poses a huge challenge to the stability African states and Pan-African ideals of the 21st century.

The eight challenge has to do with the involvement and influence of external powers in Africa. While the great powers including USA, Britain, France, Russia, and Germany have remained influential in African affairs, the intensification of relations with emerging powers from the south, particularly with China, India and Brazil have increase competition for access

to Africa's resources and markets, which the major powers refer to as the new scramble for Africa. Even though several platforms for partnerships have been established between Africa and the emerging powers whose footprints are expanding in the political/diplomatic, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions, questions have continued to trail their activities and engagements in Africa (Wapmuk & Akinkuotu, 2018). For example, since October 2000, China initiated the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) as a platform for strengthening of relations with African countries. Under FOCAC, China has made several donations to Africa countries, including contribution of the AU Headquarters' Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which was built by Chinese workers for US\$200 million (Liping, 2018). Beyond the focus on diplomatic and trade and investment relations between China and Africa, China has become increasingly involved in Africa peace and security. Chinese President Xi Jinping had pledged at the UN Peacekeeping Summit in 2015 that China would take the lead in setting up a permanent peacekeeping police squad, build a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops, and provide free military aid of 100 million dollars to the African Union, as Africa has the biggest peacekeeping needs (Liping, 2018). Notwithstanding its gifts to Africa, China faces criticisms of lack of promotion of human rights in places such as Sudan and South Sudan.

Against this backdrop, the AfCFTA is expected to enlarge Africa's market and boost industrialization and create multiplier effects. Though the agreement establishing the AfCFTA entered into force on May 30, 2019, following the deposition of instruments of ratification by 24 countries, the takeoff on July 1, 2020, had to be postponed due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. The disease which began in China in December 2019 has since spread all over the world, with Africa having 244, 805 cases, 7,224 deaths, and 114,120 recoveries as at 29th June, 2020 (Africa-CDC, 2020, June 29). The complex consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with other crises already impacting Africa, including insecurity in the Sahel, drought, locust plague, bring the risk of increasing mass poverty, unemployment, and worsening crime in the continent. Already, the UNECA has shown that between 5 million and 29 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty as a result of the pandemic. UNECA has argued that Africa is vulnerable to worsening economic conditions, not just because of the slump in oil prices and other commodities within the international market, but because of weak economic structure and other complex existing factors. Notably, the COVID has brought to the fore Africa's weak health system, inadequate access to water and sanitation facilities many rural and even urban communities. Africa has the highest prevalence of certain underlying conditions, like tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, yet it has lower ratios of hospital

beds and health professionals to its population than other regions. It is also dependent on imports for its medicinal and pharmaceutical products (UNECA, 2020). In all, seventy-one (71) per cent of African people depend on the informal sector, agriculture and private businesses for work, thus making it difficult to cope with lockdown and restrictions as mediums of mitigating the spread of COVID 19 (UNECA, 2020). There is no doubt that the AfCFTA is the central platform of Africa's development efforts in promoting its inter-trade performance and the integration of its economies. But, as African governments are forced to shift their already limited capacities toward the coronavirus crisis, African countries show seriousness and sincere efforts to mitigate the crisis; little room is left for finalizing the agreement.

IX. Concluding Remarks

The paper examined the extent to which Pan-Africanism and Pan-African vision of promoting African unity, cooperation and integration have been achieved under the AU and also assesses the challenges of cooperation and integration under the AU. The paper noted that Pan-Africanism and Pan-African movement began outside the continent, has its first phase of the institutionalization in the nineteenth-century and into the beginning of the twentieth century with the Pan-African Congresses held within that period. While the second phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism was the inauguration of the OAU, the third phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism is the creation of the AU, however, not the last. Pan-Africanism provided the needed inspiration for Africans and the African Diaspora to champion the struggle for emancipation and the restoration of their dignity, against slavery, colonialism and all forms of racism and racial exploitation, and to overcome developmental challenges. Under the AU, Pan-Africanism has continued to serve as the beacon in accelerating regional integration as exemplified in the debate for a Union of African states, and the AfCTA. The paper examined the various challenges confronting Africa's integration. The AU being a successor of the OAU bears birthmarks of the former. Under the OAU, the pan-African movement played a crucial role in the construction of African solidarity. The AU's problem today also includes institutional challenges, lack of commitments of member states to the ideals of the Union and lack of financial resources. As noted in the paper, the emerging challenges to Pan-Africanism such as the resurgence of military coups and

unconstitutional changes of government in African provides an agenda for deeper interrogation. Such a trend threatens democratic consolidation in Africa.

In conclusion, the AU summarized the expectations of Pan-Africanism in the 21st Century in the following words: The Pan-African World We Want: Building a People's movement for a just, accountable and inclusive structural transformation. A united and integrated Africa; an-Africa imbued with the ideals of justice and peace; an interdependent and virile Africa determined to map for itself an ambitious strategy; an-Africa underpinned by political, economic, social and cultural integration which would restore to Pan-Africanism its full meaning; an-Africa able to make the best of its human and material resources, and keen to ensure the progress and prosperity of its citizens by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by a globalised world; an-Africa engaged in promoting its values in a world rich in its disparities.

X. References

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